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#### BC SOCIAL WORKERS SUPPORT CHIEF CORONER'S CALL FOR ACTION

(Vancouver) BC's professional association of social workers is calling on the provincial government to redouble efforts to address the toxic illicit drug supply that last year, took the lives of at least 2,224 British Columbians.

"Deaths due to the toxic illicit drug supply have increased 400% since the provincial health officer declared a public health emergency in response to the rise in drug overdoses and deaths in 2016," said Michael Crawford, president of the BC Association of Social Workers. "Chief Coroner Lisa Lapointe's call this morning, for a massive increase in resources to ensure help is easily accessed when needed and a safe, reliable regulated drug supply is available, must be heeded."

Lapointe's report noted that almost 9,000 British Columbian lives have been lost to toxic drugs since the public health emergency began and that the illicit drug supply is increasingly toxic.

"We have examples across the province of programs that work to provide a safe drug supply, detoxification, treatment, and recovery services," said Crawford. "These programs are effective, and we need to significantly increase the number of services, make them easily accessible, and culturally-safe."

- 30 -

Michael Crawford, MSW, RSW | President  
BC Association of Social Workers

The British Columbia Association of Social Workers (BCASW) is a voluntary, not-for-profit membership association that supports and promotes the profession of social work and advocates for social justice. BCASW is one of the provincial/territorial social work associations in partnership with the Canadian Association of Social Workers.